

A DISCOURSE
CONCERNING THE
CELIBACY
OF THE
CLERGY.



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A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING THE

CELLAR

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CELLAR



OXFORD Printed 1740

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Ambros. de Viduis.

—Scit Creator omnium affectus esse varios singulorum; & ideo præmiis virtutem provocavit, non infirmitatem vinculis alligavit. —Sunt spadones, qui se castraverunt &c: sed hoc non omnibus imperatur, sed ab omnibus flagitatur. —De Virginibus 3. l. —Dominus, qui sciret prædicandam omnibus integritatem, imitandam paucis, Non omnes (inquit) capiunt verbum istud.

Hierom contra Vigilantium 2. Ep.

—Exortus est subito Vigilantius, qui damandas dicat esse vigilias, &c. continentiam haresin; pudicitiam, libidinis seminarium dicat &c. (dicat) —proh nefas! Episcopos sui dicitur sceleris habere consortes &c. qui nisi prægnantes uxores viderint Clericorum, &c. Christi Sacramenta non tribuunt. Quid facient Orientis Ecclesie? Quid Aegypti, & Sedis Apostolica? Quæ aut virgines Clericos accipiunt, aut continentes: aut, si uxores habuerint, mariti esse desistunt.—

Conc. Trident. Sess. 24. 9. Can.

—Si quis dixerit, Clericos in sacris Ordinibus constitutos posse matrimonium contrahere, non obstante lege Ecclesiastica vel voto, —anathema sit. cum Deus id [donum castitatis] recte petentibus non deneget, nec patiatur nos supra id quod possumus, tentari.

Bellarmin. de Clericis. r. 18. c.

—B. Thomas disertè docet, votum continentie esse annexum Ordinibus sacris ex solo Ecclesie decreto, ac proinde dispensabile esse, —quod ego verissimum puto. Again, *ibid.* —In tota Scriptura nullum tale extat præceptum, [viz. ut Sacerdotes non ducant uxores.] —Ib. —Ecclesia Romana multis jam sæculis permisit Græcis sacerdotibus usum uxorum, quas ante Ordinationem duxerant, ut patet ex c. Cum olim de Clericis conjugatis.



CONCERNING CELIBACY.

I. **I**T must be granted, concerning *Celibacy*; That it is a *better* condition of life *than Marriage*, for prayer and fasting, and all other service of God without distraction, and so for gaining the Kingdom of Heaven (*Matt.* 19. 12.); for works of charity to our neighbour; for avoiding covetousness, worldly cares and impediments, (and this in all, not only in afflicted, times;) for enjoying our *liberty*, (*1 Cor.* 7. 4.) which, when we can have, we are *rather to use* it. *1 Cor.* 7. 21. See for these *1 Cor.* 7. 1, 8, 26, 32. to the 37, 38. — *Lu.* 14. 20. — *1 Cor.* 7. 5.

G. 1.
Celibacy a
better state
than Marri-
age.

II. *As there is a purity and holiness of the body, as well as of the soul*, (see *2 Cor.* 7. 1. — *1 Thes.* 4. 4. — *Jud.* 23. compared with 8. and *2 Pet.* 2. 10, 14.) opposite to fornication and uncleanness, [which uncleanness is more especially opposed to holiness than other vices, (see *Rom.* 6. 19. *1 Thes.* 4. 7. — *Eph.* 5. 3.) and hath a natural shame and guilt upon it, which makes it seek privacy beyond any other sin whatsoever; (see the shame of our First Parents upon the first appearance of concupiscence, *Gen.* 2. 25. compared with *Gen.* 3. 10.)] and enjoined to be observed in reference to Christ, he being now the husband of the body, and it his spouse, (see *1 Cor.* 6. 20. compared with 13, 18, &c.): so there seems to be a greater degree of this purity of the body opposite to Matrimony. See *1 Cor.* 7. 34. and *Rev.* 14. 4. where defilement with women is opposed to virginity, as another defilement is opposed to matrimony; *Heb.* 13. 14. the marriage-bed is undefiled, that is, with sin; (for this was appointed, as for a means of propagation to Adam innocent, so for a remedy against fornication (*1 Cor.* 7. 2.) to man fallen, and troubled with

G. 2.
A holiness of
the body as
well as of
the soul.

As a holiness
of it that is
opposite to
fornication;
so, that is
opposite to
marriage

con-

concupiscence) : yet the virgin's-bed, it seems, is more undefiled, more Angel-like in respect of corporeal purity : [*undefiled*] being opposed to an imperfection of chastity virginal, as well as to the sin of lust ; to the act of concupiscence, as well as to prohibited copulations : therefore (hereafter) not to marry, nor be given in marriage, but to be like the Angels of God, is reckoned as a thing more honourable for the body. *Lu.* 20. 35. And concupiscence, one cause now of marriage, and which, could it be remedied, the Apostle would not advise so many to marriage, was not known by Adam when perfect ; and was a thing, when appearing upon his fall, which he was ashamed of, and sought to hide, as his posterity ever since do, those acts, even of the lawful bed. To a higher degree (then) of this primogeneal virginal purity of the body I suppose that expression relates, *1 Cor.* 7. 34. *The virgin careth &c. that she may be holy both in body, and in spirit.*

§. 3.
To the married, on pious occasions, forbearance of the acts of marriage advised.

And for this reason it seems to be, that we find abstinence from the acts of (if I may so call it) lawful lust advised (for the better performance of holy duties, or in times of humiliation &c.) even to those, who are in the state of marriage, (as doubtless conjugal chastity also hath many degrees in it, and in some men is far more pure than in others, and the permissions of matrimonial privileges very easily transgressed). See *Exod.* 19. 15. —three days sanctification, and not coming at their wives ; —*1 Sam.* 21. 4. —women kept from them about three days, and the vessels of the young men holy, i.e. from their wives ; —*Zech.* 7. 3. where we see, that, in times of more earnest addresses to God, this separation from carnality was continued. Neither is this only Old-Testament-ceremonial holiness : but see *1 Cor.* 7. 5. a place parallel to these ; *Defraud ye not one the other except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give your selves to fasting and prayer.* Where it may be noted, that as fasting hath no good correspondence with the acts of the conjugal bed, (*sine Cerere &c.*) so these also are as prejudicial to fasting, and its companions. And suitable to these Scriptures were the Decrees of the ancient Church : —*Diebus orationis, & jejuniorum, & preparationis ad Eucharistiam a conjuge abstinendum.* And this, because carnal pleasures are some way or other always enemies to spiritual exercises ; either proceeding to excess, and so rendring us faulty ; or too much either heightening, or also debilitating our temper, and so making us undispensed ; or dividing, and diverting some portion of that love, and of those intentions to things inferior, which are always all incomparably best spent upon, and consecrated to, God the supreme good. A-

Again, we find, after one marriage, the abstaining from a second both commended, (see *Lu. 2. 36.*) and, to some persons, to wit, those entertained in the pious or holy Services of God, or the Church, enjoined: as appears in the *widdows* of the Church, *1 Tim. 5. 9.* of whom it is there required, that such widdow *have bin the wife of one man*; which words being capable of several senses, either that she have not had two husbands at once, or not two successively; again, not two successively, either by a divorce from the former, or upon the death of the former: seeing that no woman might have two husbands at one time, nor any women at all were allowed remarrying upon divorce; (see *1 Cor. 7. 11.*) it follows, that the Apostle's widdow must be understood to be such, as had not had a second husband after the first dead. For this injunction seems to have something singular in it, the same caution being given no where to any, but only to Church-officers, and servants. Nor is it probable (as some against the current of Antiquity interpret it) that the Apostle here restrained only the admission of such a widdow as had causlessly turned away her husband, and unlawfully married another man, (which is granted was done sometimes, but seldom and without any permission of *Moses* law; (see *Mar. 10. 12.*) or, as had many husbands at the same time, (of which there are some *rare* examples amongst the heathen,) because such things cannot well be imagined (tho possible) to have hapned in the Church; or when they hapned, not to have bin severely punished with excommunication; as we see the incestuous *Corinthian* was. And the Apostle seems here rather to require something of extraordinary example and goodness above others, in such as were thus to be devoted to the Churches Service, and maintained by her Charity, than only to caution, that they should not be of the worst wicked amongst Christians. Which is further confirmed by *St. Paul's* displeasure against those Church-widdows that remarried, *ver. 11.* And if this interpretation be admitted for the widdows, much more may it, upon the like expression [*a husband of one wife*] for the Bishops of the Church, *1 Tim. 3. 2.* and for the Deacons, *1 Tim. 3. 12.*

§. 4.
Forbearance
of second
marriages
commend-
ed in some
cases en-
joined.

III. Tho *Celibacy*, as it occasions larger fruits of righteousness to many, yet if a married condition also produceth the same, it hath no preheminance in this beyond wedlock: yet, as in it self, it is a stronger resistance of the lusting of the flesh, and a greater subduer of the natural concupiscence, which all have less or more; whose importunities it heroically repelleth, whilst the married only

§. 5.
Having a
greater re-
ward in the
world to
come.

only lawfully satisfies them ; thus , it *seems worthy of*, and so to have promised to it , a *higher reward* and crown in the world to come, and is one of the eminentest of all the virtues ; as not moderating, but subduing the most violent of passions. See *Esaï. 56. 4, 5.* where *Eunuchs*, who as *dry trees* under the law were much disparaged, (*Dent. 23. 1.*) yet under the Gospel have ample promises beyond those who beget children. — See *Matt. 19. 12.* where the Kingdom of heaven being inheritable without it, the using of this means seems to be for something singular in that Kingdom, as well as for the more easie or certain attaining it. But however this be, those who grant *there* several degrees of glory, proportioned to those *here* of sanctity, must give the highest to Virgins; because if supposed only equal with the rest in all other graces, they are granted in one to be superior. See *Act. 21. 9.* where *Virgin* seems to be a term of honor.

§. 4.
Continency
especially
not: stay for
the Clergy.

IV. *Single life*, being so advantageous for having our liberty (freed from any other conjugal fetters) to bestow our selves wholly on Christ, and to wait upon him without distraction, freed from cares, and holy in body and spirit ; seems, tho worthy to be sought for by all, yet *so necessary to none* as to *those of the Clergy*, so far as they find themselves capable of it : that perfection, which others, as it were unnecessitated thereto, attain by it, being their constant duty and profession as it were ; especially, that ; to *give themselves unto prayer*, [*1 Cor. 7. 5.* — *Act. 6. 4.*] and to *wait upon the Lord without distraction*, [*v. 35.*] and to take a *special care of the poor*. *Act. 6. 3.*

§. 5.
That it is
the gift of
God.

V. 'Tis plain, that *this Continency*, and the power of living a single life, is *the gift of God* ; both 1. such a cool and moderate temper, and calm passions as do not so eagerly provoke and kindle the fire of lust in us ; and 2ly. the grace to be able to abstain and quench these fires, when we are provoked, if we will use the means ; and 3ly. the actions or means, which we use, by them to procure the grace to abstain, (as prayer, mortifications of the body, avoiding all temptations, constant and diligent employment,) are the gift of God. For so also are all other good things said to be, both natural, and moral, and spiritual ; even all those things which we have most in our power, and which our industry most procures ; and the powers themselves, and every action of them. So, to be rich, to be honourable ; the condition of a free-man, or of a servant, &c. are the gift of God. See *1 Cor. 7. 17.* — *Dent. 8.*

17, 18. — *Jo.* 3. 27. And if we cannot, of our selves think a good thought, much less refrain the most violent of our lusts, except from the gift of the Almighty.

VI. Taking this ability to contain, not for a power of being freed from all concupiscence, and from the first motions of lust; (for so none at all have this power,) but for a power to suppress these first motions, and quench these lesser sparks, before they break out into a flame, 1. either into fornication, therefore [*v.* 2.] marriage is opposed to fornication, as it is [*ver.* 9.] to burning; or, 2ly. into uncleanness, [*which uncleanness, contradistinct from fornication, is no small guilt, but every where marcheth along with it as its fellow in the catalogue of those sins that exclude us from heaven, (see Gal. 5. 19. Eph. 5. 3. Col. 3. 5. 2 Cor. 12. 21. &c. some kinds of this uncleanness being advanced above any other sin, except that in Spiritum Sanctum; see 2 Pet. 2. 10. Rom. 1. 24. Eph. 4. 18, 19. Rev. 22. 15.)*] or 3ly. into morose delectation, fomenting first, and heating our selves by it, before we put it out, [*see 1 Cor. 7. 9. expounded by the 2.] in respect of which, virginal continency in several persons is less or more pure: This power, I say, thus understood, (i.e. of being able to contain, if they be not wanting to themselves, is given to very many; nay, for some time at least, to every one.* For this I suppose granted; that whenever marriage, or the use of it, is unavoidably hindered, or by God himself also prohibited, there also is given by him the power to contain. And this happens in very many instances; before, in, and after, marriage.

g. 8.
n. 1.
Given to
very many.

For 1. before marriage, there being many ceremonies to be observed in it, many surprizals of lust seize upon youth that are more liable to it, when in an unripe age (of 12, 13, 14, years old perhaps), which for the present, that way, cannot be remedied, who many times may not marry without the license of their Superiors; as it happens to youth yet under the power of their parents, (to whom the Apostle allows a power in disposing of them, 1 Cor. 7. 36. &c. and tis there to be noted, that he considers much more the father's inclinations, towards her single life, or marriage, than the virgins); and to servants, not yet made free from their Masters. Besides that, many other causes of delaying marriage may intervene, as when it is not permitted to any at certain times of the year set aside for humiliation; *Lent, &c.* So, when external impediments occur; as being in a journey, or imprisoned, or upon the Sea, &c. and in many other cases; and these happening most-

g. 8.
n. 2.
For some
space of
time at
least, to All

what in the age too wherein concupiscence is in its greatest strength; here, if some have not the power of continency, nor yet of the remedy, marriage, how will incontinency become a guilt?

¶ 8. 2. Again, in the state of marriage, there is necessary power of
 H. 3. continency always required in respect of concupiscence toward any person whatsoever (notwithstanding the many temptations the world presents) saving one, *i. e.* his wife; and toward all absolutely, when any sickness happens to that one party, to which we are confined; or when any casual debility, tho never recoverable; so also, in all necessary absence about the affairs of life, in journeys, in being taken captive by the *Turks*, or others, &c. we must allow this gift. Els how can husbands, when busied abroad by employments, embassies, warfares, &c. be secure of the honesty of their wives? or how can the State, who many times permit not their wives to follow them, lawfully make such a separation, by which they shall necessitate them to sin? So, when the woman is menstruous, and after child-birth, before she is church'd, at least to those that were under *Moses* his law. See *Lev.* 18. 19. — 20. 18. *Ezec.* 18. 6. which abstinence in the birth of a maid-child was enjoyned for *eighty* days, almost a quarter of the year. See *Lev.* 12. 5. &c.

¶ 8. 3. And so after marriage dissolved, we must allow this gift to all
 H. 4. that are (justly or unjustly) divorced; who are prohibited under pain of adultery a second contract, all or most of them; to the Bishops; to the widows fore-named. Add to this; that of those that marry, few (if we examin things well) do it, because they want the power of continency, but for other reasons; as appears, in many forbearing marriage, as long as their places or other secular respects consist not with it; and presently, when quit of these, engaging in it: and in most, wedding after the heat and concupiscence of their youth is already in the wane and declination. And when we see so many, without marrying, at length reclaimed from former vicious courses, and becoming in a singular manner continent, we have reason to presume, that God was not wanting to them, in affording the like power to them before; but they rather wanting to the grace of God, and to themselves.

¶ 9. That none
 from not ex-
 ercising the
 act of conti-
 nency, can
 say, he hath
 not the pow-
 er.

VII. Since many that certainly have from God the power to contain, (as the divorced, the one party when the other is debilitated, &c.) yet do not, or with some difficulty (yea more than the never-married have, because otherwise accustomed,) and not with-

Concerning Celibacy.

without temptations to the contrary, do, contain ; *none can gather* (neither the delinquent, or others) *from not containing, or from some difficulty therein, that he hath not power from God to contain,* unless also he use the means ; nor, in using the means, can he certainly know it yet, unless certain that he hath used all the means, and in that manner these as he ought ; (hence none can say, that any of those, who, vowing chastity, proved afterward incontinent, had not power to contain ;) or if he perceiveth that as yet he hath not the power, yet knows he not, whether for the future he may receive it ; as many do, that of debauch'd, without marriage, at length become chaste. Therefore can none gather from an act of uncleanness or fornication committed by him, that he cannot have the gift of continency for the future ; or that absolutely from one such experience of himself he is obliged to marry. But it remains still true concerning him, as well as others ; that, as it is *melius nubere, quam uri* ; so tis *melius continere, quam nubere* ; if then at length he shall seriously attempt to quench such burning with prayers, solitude, fasting, &c, the prime and more noble, rather than by wedlock, the second, and much inferior, remedy.

VIII. It seems, *that he that hath, and yet doth not exercise, the gift of Continency, nor practise our Saviours precept or advice of Celibacy, Matt. 19. 12. doth not sin in so doing.* For then marrying, to some persons, would be a sin. Which 1. the Apostle saith, it is not, even to those, whom, upon the gift of continency, he adviseth to Celibacy. See 1 Cor. 7. 27, 28, 36, 38. — and Heb. 13. 4. 2. If it were ; it would follow, (since there is no divorcement upon any such title,) that there would be a sin which a man was bound to live in, and having committed it once, to commit it always ; and whether would not the children here also be illegitimate, where the marrying is unlawful. 3. Then Celibacy can be recommended to no persons in respect of any times of distress, (as yet we find it was by the Apostle 1 Cor. 7. 26.) since, after puberty, all men sin, either in marrying, or els in abstaining : for those who have not the gift of continency in the most afflicted times, ought to marry ; and the other, in the most prosperous, to forbear. 4. Those, whom such supposed precept of Celibacy should oblige, must somehow certainly know it ; els how can they either forbear, or repent of, a sin, which they know not when they commit. And, as soon as they know it, they are bound, either presently to marry, if they find they have not the gift of continency ; or for ever to abstain, if they have : so that those who marry not, as soon as capable of

§. 10.
That he who
having this
gift doth not
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neth not.

Whether
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continency
(supposing
it to be giv-
en only to
some) can
by them be
certainly
known.

marriage, and marry afterward, either sin in marrying then, or sinned in not marrying before. 5. But how any one can certainly know this gift in him, I see not. First, by what signs shall he know if he hath it? In being free from temptation? So none is. In overcoming them? But who foreknows the success of future conflicts? May not he marry then, if much tempted, to prevent sinning? May he not marry, unless he first burn? But then in marrying before burning, perhaps he hath the gift; and so sins in marrying. But if by the effect only of resisting, or yielding to, a temptation, we know the gift; it follows, that none can know he wants the gift, but by (at least once) sinning, yet, to prevent which sin none may, first, marry. 2. Again, how shall he know if he have not this gift? by burning or any one act of any uncleanness? 1. None can argue from not exercising the act of continency, that he hath not the power, (as is shewed before §. 9.) till he knows whether this failing proceeds from the absence, or from his own ill managing, of God's gift. For that it oft proceeds from our ill husbandry of grace, is manifest in many of those mentioned before §. 7. who having certainly from God the power to contain, yet are many times very incontinent. If in this case therefore he should go and marry, having the gift, but abusing it, what *thus* would this be, but a multiplying of sins, the sin of lust begetting the sin of wedlock? 2. If thus, after any such uncleanness, all (as being denied the gift of continency) were obliged to marry, then all, who remain not in a pure virginity, would be sinners in a single life.

§. 11. But then; these are likewise fit things to be known; whether
 n. 1. the gift once had may not afterward be withdrawn? for if so; at several times, to the same person to marry, or live single, may be a sin. Again, whether not being given at first, it may be given afterward? for then, after some act of incontinency we need not cast our selves presently into the bonds of marriage; upon the hopes we have, from our prayers &c, of recovering this gift: neither indeed is every one by the Apostle, after burning, bound to marry, (unless he find himself refractory, and unwilling to use the means to quench such burning, as well as to remove all occasions of this flame, apt from his temper, temptations, &c, continually to break out again,) because he is not by this certain, that for the future he may not by the grace, and other means used, be freed from ever falling again into this fire. Since many, after such burning, have attained, without marrying, to the highest degree of Continency. As S. *Austin*, after long incontinency, received this gift, so soon as he humbly, and earnestly, and mortifiedly fought it. Now.

Now if this once be granted from what is premised; that marriage to no person (I mean in relation to his power to contain) is a sin, nor celibacy to any absolutely necessary; it follows, our Saviour's advice *Matt. 19. 12.* is not a precept or command of absolute duty to any, under pain of sinning if he not observe it; but only a Counsel of greater perfection, under the penalty (if I may so say) hereafter of a less reward if he not practise it. (See 2 *Cor. 9. 6.*) Note, that by *counsel* or *precept of perfection*, (where-ever this expression is found referring to *celibacy*, *abandoning of riches*, &c.) I mean this: The advising us of, and to, a means, whereby we may, more easily, and free from impediments, attain the diminishing of sin, and the increase of virtue and grace in us; in which greater purity from sin, and greater practice of holy duties and habits of grace, and not in the means prescribed, consists that degree of perfection, to which we by this means attain: which perfection also may, possibly, but not so easily, be acquired without it.

I X. Next: It seems also, to be a *counsel* or *precept* of greater perfection, not only to some particular persons, (as some others in the next place would limit it,) but *to all*; and that, tho every one hath not, (*Matt. 19. 11.*) yet *every one may have this gift of Continency* (and so may practise the precept or counsel of celibacy) *if he please to use those means and endeavours, upon which God gives it*; and that every one may make himself an Eunuch, if he please, for the kingdom of heaven. (1). For, first, were it a singular gift gratuitally given only to some men; then, as we have shewed before, that it is necessary for those, to whom we hold it is given as a precept of duty, by some signs certainly to discern it, for their avoiding of sin; so tis necessary also to these to whom we hold it is given as a counsel of perfection, to know it, for their endeavouring to do that which may more please God; that such gracious-gifts may not be bestowed in vain, and their salvation suffer much impediment; if men endeavour not, or their endeavour be not only in vain, but displeasing to God, *ne quis incontinentia laborans, dum calibatum appetit, cum Deo luctetur*, saith Calvin; and exposing them to sin, if God give not.

Now the difficulties of discerning any such thing; see before: yet without discerning which (unless all be capable of this gift) there can be no alacrity in our endeavours; nor will any labour to make themselves Eunuchs. Especially, when one sees any evident signs, or also hath once felt the effects of incontinency, none should dare any further to defer marriage, or any further entertain any

§. 12.
That tho all have not, yet all may have, the gift of continency: and that God denies it to none, at any time, they using the means.

endeavour of attaining this gift contrary to such indications of God's denial of it to him ; yet is this much contrary to the practice of many holy men. (2.) There seems no sufficient reason, to make this grace, which is conversant about the strongest of all passions, and the very root of sin ; upon which depend so many excellent advantages in serving God &c, (confess'd by all,) and granted also to be given to all, at all times, when the remedy of marriage cannot (as often it can not) be had ; to make this grace, I say, when there is opportunity of marrying, then only, a gratuitous grace given to some ; others being denied it, tho never so earnest after it. And thus to restrain this grace, only upon such a pretence, because tho denied the gift of continency, they have a sinless way of satisfying their concupiscence : when as indeed this appointed remedy of marriage (as it refers to incontinency , not to progeny) may argue only the difficulty in some, not the impossibility in any, of attaining this gift ; and, being instituted for a help of our weakness, ought not to be made an argument of the restraint of God's goodness and bounty. Again ; no reason, to make this grace only particular to some few ; when as all other graces whatsoever, conversant about the like object, *i.e.* the moderating and subduing of our passions, are proclaimed to be general ; and all men capable of them, who are not wanting to God and themselves. So we do not say that any are necessitated to be immoderate in meat, or drink, or sleep, in the love of riches, or honor, but, upon doing their endeavour, grace sufficient to be given to all, to bridle the appetite, and master the affections ; only the extremities of concupiscence it is that we affirm some men are dis-enabled upon any means whatsoever to suppress. When as mean-while it must be granted, that to those singular favorites, to whom God pleaseth to give it, it is, both gotten by means ; else why are any said to make themselves *Eunuchs* ? and preserved by means : for none that have the gift (as those who in marriage have their bedfellows sick or absent) are free from temptations, and do only by means and resistance overcome them ; which means experience shews to be powerful, not only for subduing lust in men, but in the brute beasts also. Whereas therefore there are two sorts of God's gifts to us ; 1. some to the obtaining of which is required our endeavour joyned or subservient to God's both preventing and assisting grace, or aid ; such as are *Faith, Hope, Charity, Patience, &c.* which, tho always God's gifts, yet may be said in some sense to be in our power also ; in as much as we are to presume, that God denies them to none, by his aid rightly first seeking and labouring for them. 2. Others given

given *gratis* by him without any cooperation of ours, (tho we may also desire and pray for them. 1 Cor. 14. 1.) Note that there is not any other of those usually called *gratia gratis data*, (which are divided to every man as the Spirit plealeth, mentioned 1 Cor. 12.) any way like unto this of continency. 1. They being not conversant about passions, or bettering our selves, but edifying and profiting others. 1 Cor. 12. ver. 7.— 2. Not by our means procured, or conserved, but conferred without our cooperation or endeavor; therefore we find no exhortations to the practice of them, as if they were in our power, as we find to continency: 1 Cor. 7. We find it not said concerning them, *There be Prophets that have made themselves Prophets*, or, —*He that can receive them, let him receive them*. 3. Those who have them sinning, if they be not used: the contrary of which is proved in continency. 4. Lastly, neither is there any thing said of continency, as restraining it to some particular person; which is not said of those other gifts, and graces of God of the first kind, as particularly of that of Faith. See 23. 6. (3). Concerning the other great precepts or counsels for attaining perfection, as that in particular by quitting superfluous riches (and so by this, all the cares and temptations of them,) (of which may be said, what is said of marrying, 1 Cor. 7. 34. and v. 30, 31. compared with 29. —2 Tim. 2. 4.) so often recommended, See Matt. 19. 21. presently after the recommending of continency, v. 12. and both of them to be done for the Kingdom of Heaven. See likewise Lu. 12. 33. Lu. 3. 11.—6. 35. —Matt. 5. 42. —Lu. 16. 9. 11. —Matt. 19. 29. compared 27. (where, as we must grant, that, tho marriage be lawful, yet the continent doth better; so, tho possession of riches is lawful, yet he that parts with, and bestows, most of wealth superfluous upon the poor, doth better, than he that keeps or spends more of it upon himself:) Concerning this counsel, I say, we do not contend, but that all are capable of receiving it: and yet our Saviour, upon occasion of the young man's not receiving so hard a saying, and so difficult a lesson, seems to put the same difficulty in it, as in continency: for when he breaks out upon it, [*verily I say a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom &c.* and again, *Camels shall as easily be threaded thro Needles*, ver. 23, 24. see 1 Cor. 1. 26.] he saith only, (if we well observe,) It is hard for rich men to receive this saying, [*go and sell,*] i. e. of parting with their superfluous wealth. For, be this hardness of rich mens entering into heaven, from their trusting in their riches, or from having continual temptations of excess, and fuel for all their lusts ministered by wealth; or from continual cares and distractions from them,

them, Matt. 13. 22. (which also he names, from marriage, 1 Cor. 7. 35): all is presently remedied in receiving this saying, (yet foolish men take no notice of it,) *sell that ye have*, [i. e. *superfluons*,] *and give it away in almes*, (where the charity is not so much to others, as to our selves.) For in parting with his riches, he is sure at once to part with his trust in them, cares, temptations of them, &c; for no man trusts in, or is tempted with, what he hath not. I have stayed the longer upon this general offer of the gift of continency on God's part; because the conceit of it as of a private gift is very discouraging (as we see by their practises, where this doctrine is taught,) for the attempting that heavenly condition of life (so much recommended by our Saviour, and St. Paul) after they first believe, that for some men no means can procure it; and then, by the strong assaults of their lusts (from which none are free) believe that themselves are such. And hence, whilst we are in suspense, whether there be a possibility of it, or no, in respect of us, (as there is to none a possibility, who are destitute of the gift) we cast all our care, not upon mortifying and refraining our lust; but upon the observance of the Symptoms of this gift, and the several risings and heights of our lusts, accordingly to shape to our selves that future condition of life, to which our present seems to lead us. And all this without cause, whereas we may make our selves what we are not; and God's providing a remedy for an innocent satisfying of that concupiscence, which cannot (by our deficiency) otherwise be allayed, was by reason of our ordinary weakness, not of our absolute necessity; to whom he (in some times) indulged a facile changing also of those to whome men were joyned: but it likewise not for their necessity, but for the *hardness of their hearts*. Matt. 19. 8. —Whereas now it is a fruit of the Evangelical perfection, that husbands (by mutual consent) do separate from their wives (without taking others) for the Kingdom of God, (Lk. 18. 29. compared 28.) always secure of the gift of continency from God, (if resolute in their endeavours of preserving it): Else this would be an act most unlawful, which our Saviour makes so heroical, and promiseth to it so great a reward.

- §. 13. It seems therefore, that God, this gift being so advantageous to his service, (see *parag.* 1.) and so common, (see *par.* 7.) not denied upon repentance and prayer &c to many grievous sinners, after long contrary habits, without their using the remedy of marriage; that God, I say, denies not this power to any at all, who first have power over their own will; decree and stand stedfast in their heart;

1 Cor. 7. 37. resolutely undertake and offer this their singleness to God for such an end, as is so much approved by him; and then practise also the means conducing to it, which are observed (as abstinence, for example,) naturally to cure the burnings of lust, even in brute beasts.

Which thing to confirm yet further, both from the Scriptures, and from the primitive times of the Church: first, had God denied this gift to any, [1.] it seems that St. Paul could not justly have blamed the widows, when some of them young, for remarrying; whose marriage, he saith, was out of wantonness, and that they had damnation, for having cast off their first faith and promise, (i.e. of living single, and attending wholly to those charitable duties &c.) which they had made to Christ, and the Church: but if God had not given them the power of observing their vow, the Apostle should have allowed their remarrying, and blamed their vowing; who ordered also for the future, that such young women should no more be admitted to such vows or duties, for publick service of the Church; not because they could not, but ordinarily would not, abstain.

[2.] Neither would our Saviour have recommended the like resolution and attempt, in those, who, he saith, made themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven, Matt. 19. 12. if he would not also be assistant to them with his grace; as he approved their purpose, and design; to which also they were allured by his Encomiums of that happier condition. Nor would he have (and that in the general) commended those, who leave the pleasures of marriage for the Kingdom of God's sake, that is, for the better serving God in any way, (see 1 Cor. 7. 34, 35.) or, those who have forsaken their wives, (i.e. by mutual consent, 1 Cor. 7. 4, 5.) see Lu. 18. 29. compared with Matt. 19. 29. *There is none that hath left, (or, every one, that hath forsaken,) wife &c. who shall not receive &c. Forsaken*, i.e. as the Apostles did, in local separation from them, (see Matt. 19. 27.) unless continency were a gift; which all pious purposes, using the means for conserving it, and intending God's glory in it, may presume upon. Tho, where we do not subdue our lust, S. Paul as much prohibits any long separation, as our Saviour here encourageth it. See 1 Cor. 7. 5.

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[3.] Neither would S. Paul have approved the same resolution in those, who could master so far their own will: 1 Cor. 7.37. who doubtless, what he praiseth in the father, (who yet might be §.16.

necessitated to go against his will, by the virgin's incontinnacibillity) he would much more have approved in the virgin. Neither is that need (*ver. 36.*) necessity absolute, as appears by what follows, [*do what he will,*] the other doing better.

§. 17. [4.] The prohibition likewise in the primitive times, (tho not in all Churches, that no married person might be admitted to sacred Orders, or, that every one, upon these received, must separate from his wife, yet) that none single, when entering into holy Orders, (I mean of Priesthood) might afterward marry, shews the perswasion of Antiquity to be; either that continency was denied to none using the means, &c; or else, that, it being a special gift only to some, every one, before taking Orders, or making a Vow, might certainly know, not only, whether he had the gift for the present, but whether he might also persevere therein to his death, (so far as concerned God the Doner thereof.) But here it is unintelligible, how such assurance can arise, only to some particular persons; nor can any direct, how such a special gift, not only for the present, but the future also, may be discerned. Meanwhile concerning the prohibitions and practice of Antiquity, see and compare together *Can. Apostol. 27.* — *Conc. Chalcedon. can. 13. 15.* — *Constantinop. in Trullo. can. 6. 12, 13.* compared *Can. Apost. 6:* In brief, you will find the issue to be much what to this purpose: That no Presbyter may marry after his taking Orders, nor Bishop after his Consecration: That of those who, being before married, are admitted afterward into holy Orders, some Churches required that they should ever after (by mutual consent, [which was known before Orders conferr'd]) abstain from their wives; as the Roman Church: Some, that Bishops only should abstain universally; and simple Presbyters, only abstain then when they were to officiate; as the Greek Church. — See likewise Provincial Councils celebrated about the time of the *Nicene Council*, and approved afterwards by the *Constant. Conc. in Trullo. can. 2.* — *Ancyran. Conc. can. 10.* — *Neocaesar. can. 1:* — &c.

§. 18. But I think it best, for saving the labour of seeking, to set you down some of them: which you will find so clear, as that I think nothing can be replied to them. — *Apostol. Canon. 27. In nuptiis autem qui ad Clerum erecti sunt, Præcipimus ut, si voluerint, uxores accipiant, sed lectores cantoresque tantummodo;* not the higher Orders of Bishop, Presbyter, Deacon, &c. — *Conc. Ancyranum* (before the first Council of Nice) *Can. 10. — Diaconi quicumque cum ordinantur, si in ipsa*

*ipsa ordinatione protestati sunt, dicentes, velle se habere uxores, nec posse se continere, (where posse is taken as expounded §. 24.) hi postea si ad nuptias venerint, maneat in ministerio, propterea quod his Episcopus licentiam dededit. Quicumque sane tacuerunt & susceperunt manus impositionem, professi continentiam, si postea ad nuptias venerint, a ministerio cessare debebunt. [But note, that, si protestati sunt, is here said of Deacons only.] — Conc. Neocaesar. (before Nice) c. n. 1. — Presbyter si uxorem duxerit, ab ordine suo illum deponi debere. — Conc. Nicenum can. 3. — Omnibus modis interdixit sancta Synodus; neque Episcopo, neque Presbytero, &c. omnino licere habere secum mulierem extraneam, nisi forte sit mater, aut soror, aut avia, aut amita, vel matertera. In his namque solis personis, & harum similibus omnis, qua ex mulieribus est, suspicio declinatur. Whereas might they have entertained a wife, neither would there have bin cause of such suspicion; nor would it have bin reasonable, nor safe, to deprive their wives of all Women-attendance or Society. As for the story of Paphnutius in this Council, [which makes so great a noise amongst us; so that this instance stands for a bulwark against all the other evidence, in this point, of Antiquity, (see Calvin Institut. 4. l. 12. c. 26. and generally all our writers,)] this is the All of it: That, motion being made by some in the Council, that the married Presbyteries, (i.e. such as were married before made Presbyters) should after their Ordination be separated from their wives: [which separation the Greek Church allows not to this day; and of which the 6th of those called Canons Apostolical, saith thus, (notwithstanding that the same Canons prohibit marriage after Ordination except to Lectores & Cantores:)] Episcopus aut Presbyter uxorem propriam nequaquam sub obtentu religionis abjiciant: (Some conceive this to be meant, *without her consent; others, *not for cohabitation, but for maintenance only:)] Si vero rejecerit, excommunicetur. — And Concil. Gangrense, because some held it unlawful to receive the Communion from a Presbyter formerly married, was necessitated to make this Canon: 4. — Quicumque discernit, a Presbytero, qui uxorem habuit, (here tis habuit, not habet,) quod non oporteat eo ministrante de oblatione percipere, Anathema sit.] That, such a motion being made, I say, Paphnutius, a Reverend Bishop, and a Confessor, who never married, withstood it, saying, Grave jugum, &c. neque a singulorum uxoribus fortasse eam castimonie normam posse servari. But now mark what follows: — Illud satis esse, ut qui in Clerum ante ascripti erant quam duxissent uxores, hi secundum veterem Ecclesie Traditionem deinceps a nuptiis se abstinerent; non tamen quinquam ab illa quam jampridem, cum laicus erat, uxorem duxisset, se jungi debere.*

debere. The story is in *Socrates Eccl. Histor.* 1. l. 8. c. and in others from him. *Sozomen.* 1. l. 22. c. Judge now what cause there is, to urge *Paphnutius* for the marrying of the Clergy, after H. Orders received by them when as single. I go on. —*Conc. Romanum* under *Silvester*, in the time also of *Constantine* the Great, *Can. 7.* —*Nulum autem Subdiaconorum ad nuptias transire precipimus; ne aliquam pravaricationem sumpserit.* —*Elibertin. Concil.* about the same time in Spain; *Can. 33.* *Placuit in totum prohibere Episcopis, Presbyteris, Diaconis, ac Subdiaconis, positis in ministerio, abstinere se a conjugibus suis, & non generare filios. Quod quicumque fecerit, ab honore Clericatus exterminetur.* Which Canon plainly shews; That at that time in the Western, tho not in the Eastern, Churches, not only marriage after Holy Orders was forborn, but abstinence from their wives, by those who were married before, was commonly practised; since he, who should do the contrary, was so highly punished. —*Conc. Arelatense secundum* under the same *Silvester*, *Can. 2.* —*Assumi aliquem in Sacerdotium in vinculo conjugii constitutum, nisi fuerit premissa conversio, non oportet.* Two Councils, in which *S. Austin* was present, *1. *Conc. Carthag.* 2. *Can. 2.* —*Placuit & concedet sacro-sanctos Antistites & Dei Sacerdotes, necnon & Levitas (i.e. Deacons &c.) continentes esse in omnibus &c. ut quod Apostoli docuerunt, & ipsa servavit antiquitas, nos quoque custodiamus. Ab universis Episcopis dictum est, omnibus placet, ut Episcopi, Presbyteri, &c., pudicitia custodes etiam ab uxoribus se abstineant.* Hence *S. Austin*, (*Confess.* 10. l. 30. c.) speaking of his continency, before obliged by Priesthood to it, saith, —*Et quoniam dedisti factum est, & antequam dispensator Sacramenti tui fierem.* And *2. *Conc. Africanum cap. 37.* —*Præterea cum de quorundam Clericorum quamvis erga uxores proprias incontinentia referretur; placuit Episcopos, & Presbyteros, & Diaconos, secundum priora statuta etiam ab uxoribus continere. Quod nisi fecerint, ab Ecclesiastico removeantur officio. Ceteros autem Clericos ad hoc non cogi, sed secundum uniuscujusque Ecclesie consuetudinem observari debere.* —These were before the third General Council. —Add to these the fourth General Council of *Chalcedon.* *Can. 13.* —*Quoniam in quibusdam provinciis concessum est Psalmistis & Lecttoribus, (sc. Apost. Can. 27. quoted before,) uxores ducere, constituit sancta Synodus prorsus cuicumque ex his non licere alterius sectæ accipere uxorem, &c.* Where tis plain, that other Clergy besides *Psalmists* and *Readers* might not marry at all.

§. 19. Hitherto I have kept within the times of the first four General Councils, to which we promise much conformity. I will joyn to these

these a Canon or two in *Constantinopol. Conc. in Trullo*, reckoned by the Eastern Church for a part of the *sixth* General Council, tho it was not consented to by the *Roman Patriarch*; Can. 6.—*Quoniam in Apostolicis Canonibus dictum est, eorum qui non ducta uxore in Clerum promoventur, solum lectores & cantores uxorem posse ducere, & nos hoc servantes decernimus, ut deinceps nulli penitus Hypodiacono, vel Diacono, vel Presbytero, post sui Ordinationem, conjugium contrahere liceat.* &c. Canon. 12. *Iubet omnino Antistites, (i. e. Bishops,) postquam sunt ordinati, a propriis uxoribus secedere:* and here they take notice of the *6th. Apostol. Canon*, quoted before in the last §, and yet advance beyond it: *quoniam Apostoli (say they) cum fides inciperet, ad fidelium imbecillitatem se magis demittebant &c.* —Can. 13.—*decernunt, Presbyteros a prioribus suis legitimis uxoribus non separari, sed eo tempore quo sacrificant; & expellentes suas uxores pietatis pre-textu, excommunicandos.* And this (say they) notwithstanding the contrary custom of the *Roman Church*. Thus the Council in *Trullo*. And ever since have the same laws and customs bin preserved in the Eastern Churches, as we may see in the Answer of *Jeremias Patriarch of Constantinople*, in *Epilogo* to the Reformed, soliciting his approbation of their innovation in this matter, and remembering him of the Apostle's rule, *Melius est nubere quam uri*,—and his order,—*Oportet Episcopum esse unius uxoris virum*: to which he replies this;—*Proinde & nos illis sacerdotibus, qui in virginitate persistere non possunt, priusquam tamen consecrentur, & Sacerdotes [i. e. futuri] fiant &c.* Ille autem [Sacerdos, entering into Orders, or others vowing Virginity] *qui semel virginitatem professus est, virgo permaneat, nec jam illi ullam amplius licentiam post votum susceptum nubendi damus. Nemo enim mittens manum ad aratrum, & respiciens retro, idoneus est consequendo caelesti regno.* [Here is Priests, after their consecration, or others vowing Virginity, for ever after denied marriage.] —Thts the modern law of the *Greek Church*; and if the prohibiting them afterward, makes them the more, who intend Priesthood, to take wives before, and so many of the *Greek Clergy de facto* are married, to enjoy this liberty more than for necessity; yet this is an abuse no ways countenanced by their Ecclesiastical Canons. Much less may we imagin that they are obliged by any such law (*ne periculo fornicandi se exponant*) to take wives before they may enter into this Holy profession, so contrary both to the Apostle's Counsel, *1 Cor. 7.* and the Church's former Injunctions, when-as even all secular employments have at least the liberty of a single life; and the Reformed themselves, so great friends to marriage, yet impose no such yoke upon their Clergy, nor hath any

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that I know of entertained such a fancy save *Vigilantius*.

Out of the *Canons* then recited above you may observe, 1. That the Greek Church, who acknowledg and practise these *Canons* in this point to this day, allow indeed the use of their wives, except when they officiate, (but what if they officiate every day, as many Priests do?) to Priests married before Ordination, but not so to Bishops; but permit not that any Ordained unmarried may afterward marry at all. 2^{ly}. Again, That those married persons, who were to be made Presbyters in the Roman Church, and Bishops in the Oriental, might not separate from their wives without consent, received from the wives before such Ordination or Consecration of them. 3^{ly}. That such continency was annexed to Holy Orders only by Ecclesiastical Constitution, and was rather *Lex Continentia*, than *Votum*: which therefore hath bin capable of many dispensations, and the *Canons* about it somewhat differing; and the Clergy more restrained by some of them than by others. But this seems to be a received ground amongst them all in those primitive times, that Continency is a general gift, at least in *potentia remota*, i.e. which is by God denied to none using the means, and rightly preparing himself for it, &c. Els how could they prudently make such laws, strictly prohibiting marriage for such a number of men, involving also the Deacons, and Subdeacons, upon penalty of degradation from their office, (which laws you see, the Reformed; because they hold continency a particular gift, only possible to some, generally decry.) How could they allow of a separation (by consent once given) of a man and his wife for ever, required, in the Roman Church, of all; in the Eastern, of Bishops; notwithstanding what the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 7.5? unless you will say, that the Church-Officers in time of Ordination could discern who had this gift, who not. Or, that there was no party coming to be ordained, or consenting to such a separation, but was able to discern it in himself, and that not only for the present, but always for the future; and likewise that none would present himself, that knew he had it not.

§.20.

Neither doth the Apostle's declaring from the Spirit, 1 Tim. 4. 1. &c. that in the latter times there should arise Apostates &c. forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, any way prejudice these injunctions and practices of ancient Church, (nor consequently of the latter times, herein following only her example.) 1. Because the Apostle, by opposing to such error, that every creature and ordinance of God is good, (according to Gen. 1. 31. and

2. 23, 24.) and therefore being *sanctified first, by the word of God and prayer*, may lawfully be used, (see 1 Tim. 4. 3, 4, 5.) sheweth, that he means such Apostates, as abstain from, or prohibit, marriage and meats, as in themselves unlawful, and unclean, and contaminating. Which thing can neither be objected to the ancient, nor modern Church-practice, using abstinence from some meats for the chastisement of the body, nor for any uncleanness in the food; and not forbidding marriage to any single person absolutely, but only upon his voluntary undertaking such an employment, with which they imagin a married condition not so well to sute. In which case if necessary abstinence from marriage be a fault, the Apostle himself may seem to comply with it in those expressions of his 1 Tim. 5. 11. 12. — 2ly. Because experience hath manifested the Apostle's prophecy to have bin most eminently fulfilled in other persons of these latter times, (whom these Fathers even in these points most vehemently resisted,) affirming downright all marriage, especially with reference to procreation of children [therefore the married were advised by them, in such manner to use their wives, as to avoid this, (see S. Aust. de moribus. Manich. 18.c.)] to be unlawful, and the work or design of the Devil, as likewise flesh-diet to be unclean and defiling. *Animata abominantes interdicut* (saith Epiphanius her. 47.) *non continentia gratia, neque honesta vita, sed ob timorem, & imaginationem ut non contaminentur ab animatorum esu. Vino vero omnino non utuntur, Diabolicum esse dicentes.* — And S. Austin contra Faust. 30. l. 5. c. *Ipsam creaturam immundam dicitis, quod carnes Diabolus operetur facientio materia mali.* — And de heres. 46. c. *Non vescuntur carnibus, tanquam de mortuis vel occisis fugerit divina substantia: Vinum non bibunt, dicentes, fel esse principum tenebrarum.* Such were some of the Gnosticks, Encratites, Montanists, Marcionites, and in the last place the Manichees, being as it were the last extract and quintessence of all those former gross errors, not a little potent even in S. Austin's times; who, not holding all things to have bin created by the same good God, but this lower world by an evil principle, or by the Prince of darkness, as they call him, affirm, in the begetting of a man, that the Soul, which they account to be a part of the substance of God himself, becomes fettered and imprisoned in the walls or handy-work of the devil, i.e. the body, from which it is again released only by death; (therefore was marriage, occasioning such imprisonment, forborn by all their elect; and tho this permitted to their auditors, yet (saith Austin) it was, *non esse peccatum, sed peccantibus veniam largientes, propterea quod illis*

necessaria ministrabant. con. *Faust. Man.* 30. l.) Likewise that the same part of God was continually more defiled, and enclosed by such and such gross nourishments of the body. And when of such errors they were accused by the Fathers, it was ordinary with them to recriminate the Orthodox with the same things; both for their frequent abstinencies from flesh, and some other fruits; and for their (to some persons at least) recommending virginity; who in this matter were answered by them after the same manner, as the Protestants, objecting the same things, are now by the Church of Rome. See concerning this the contest between *Faustus* the Manichee and *S. Austin*, (con. *Faust. Manich.* 30. l.) and see concerning such Hereticks in the Church before the Manichees, *Irenaeus* adv. *Heret.* 1. l. 22. c. there, of *Saturninus* and *Basilides*, he saith, *Nubere autem & generare, a Satana dicunt esse. Multi autem ex iis & ab animalibus continent &c.* — See *Clem. Alexand. Strom.* 3. near the beginning. *Marcionista quidem dicunt malam esse naturam ex mala materia &c.* — *qua quidem ratione nolentes implere mundum, qui factus est a Creatore, volunt abstinere a nuptiis, resistentes suo Creatori &c.* — See much what the same relation with that of *Irenaeus*, in *Epiphan. Heret.* 23. and 46. and 47. *Continentiam hic* (i.e. *Tatianus*) *pradicat, asserens nihil differre matrimonium a scortatione, sed idem esse. Har.* 46. And the judgment of the Fathers commenting on this place of *Timothy*, applies it to the same men. See *S. Ambrose*, or the Author of those Comments in his works. *Doctrina*, saith he, *quae nunc in Marcionistis, (quamvis pene defecerint,) vel Patricianis, aut maxime in Manicheis denotatur. Hi enim & Christum natum negant, & nuptias prohibent, & abstinendum a cibis tradunt.* — *Chrysostom. de Manicheis, & Encratistis, & Marcionistis, omnique illorum officina hic loquitur &c.* — After whom see *Dr. Hammond* on *1 Tim.* 4. note b. and the authorities there cited by him. And in the last place consider what *Mr. Mede* himself (*Apostacy of the latter times*, p. 113.) granteth; namely, That errors about marriages and meats were no novelties in the Apostles own times, as the diligent Reader may easily collect out of their own Epistles: which makes it improbable, that he would specify the apostacy of latter times in these alone. Thus much *Mr. Mede*. Neither will that expression [*in latter times*] (the like expressions to which are found in many other places; see *2 Tim.* 3. 1.—4. 3. — *2 Pet.* 3. 3. — *1 Jo.* 2. 18. — *Jude* 18. — *2 Thes.* 2. 3.) carry the purpose of this prophecy beyond the days of these ancient Hereticks. For first, this expression doth not seem in the Apostle's drift so to indicate the future times, as altogether to exclude the present; they reckoning even

even their own times also a part of the *last* times, (see 1 *Pet.* 1. 20. *Heb.* 1. 2. *Act.* 2. 17. 1 *Jo.* 2. 18. 1 *Cor.* 10. 11.) and therefore, when they describe such wicked persons, advising those they writ to for the present to beware of them, to resist them, to teach contrary doctrine, &c. See 1 *Tim.* 4. 6. &c. 2 *Tim.* 3. 14. — 4. 2. 2 *Pet.* 3. 2. 1 *Jo.* 4. 1. Or, 2^{ly}. if they do; yet thus, either we must free the Father's times from any such imputation, as living before these latter times here prophesied of, (and consequently in all future times we must absolve all those, who in these matters affirm no more than the Fathers did,) or, if these latter times involve the days of the Fathers also, (as Mr. Mede fancies them to begin about 360, or 410, (*Apostasy* p. 84.) yet in the same times we find also these hereticks contemporaries with, and much combated by, the Fathers. And therefore whether the prophecy (eying those times) is likely to mean them, [i. e. the asserters of marriage and meats to be in themselves utterly unlawful and unclean,] or to mean the Fathers rather, their Antagonists in these points, I leave to the Readers judgment.

[5^{ly}.] The same perswasion, in Antiquity, of the universality of this gift to all seeking it, may be gathered from the vowing 1. of virginity, much used, allowed, recommended by them. Of which also we find something in the ancient Councils. See *Conc. Ancyran.* before that of *Nice*, Can. 19. *Quotquot virginitatem pollicitam pravaricati sunt, professione contempta inter digamos haberi debebunt.* Here the practice thereof appears. — *Conc. Elibertin.* about the same time with that of the *Nicene*, Can. 13. *Virgines que se Deo dedicaverunt, si pactum perdiderint virginitatis, atque libidini servierint, non intelligentes quid amiserint, placuit nec in sine dandam eis esse Communionem &c.* — *Conc. Romanum* at the same time under *Silvester*, Can. 10. *Nullus Episcoporum virginem sacratam maritali consortio (i. e. to receive the veil, and the solemnity of her marriage unto Christ) expetierit benedicere, nisi eam probaverit 72 annorum esse constitutam, ubi probabitur judicium vere pudicitie, ut in 72 annis requirens Virum Christum pudicitia custodita, uncta vertice introducatur ad nuptias Christi, velamen capitis ferens, non cordis,* (alluding, I suppose, to 2 *Cor.* 3.) This admission was not, of her to vow at 72 years, who was *sacrata* before, but of her, having so long faithfully kept her vow, to such an honour as this ceremony imports. In this same time, namely of the Emperor *Constantine*, were some former *Roman*-laws, prejudicial to Celibacy, abrogated by him for their sakes, who had vowed to keep their virgin-chastity inviolate.

§. 21.

Euseb. de vita Constant. 4. l. 26. c. — Concil. Carthaginense 3. Can. 33. *Ut virgines sacrae, si privatae fuerint parentibus, a quibus custodiebantur, providentia Episcopi, vel Presbyteri, ubi Episcopus absens est, in Monasterio virginum vel gravioribus faminis commendentur, ut simul habitantes invicem se custodiant, ne passim vagantes Ecclesia laedant estimationem.* — And Carthag. 4. Can. 104. *Si quae viduae quantumlibet adhuc in minoribus annis posita, & matura aetate a viro relicta, se devoverunt Domino, & veste laicali abjecta, sub testimonio Episcopi & Ecclesiae religioso habitu apparuerint, postea vero ad nuptias seculares transierint, secundum Apostolum, damnationem habebunt, quoniam fidem castitatis, quam Domino voverunt, irritam facere ausae sunt.* Tales ergo personae sine Christianorum communione maneant, &c. And afterward. De talibus ait Apostolus: *Quum luxuriatae fuerint nubere volunt, habentes damnationem* &c. These two Councils were before the fourth General Council of Chalcedon, and both subscribed by St. Austin. Lastly, see Conc. Chalced. with which I will conclude; Can. 14. *Diaconissam non debere ante annos 40 ordinari statuimus, & hoc cum diligenti probatione, si vero — postea se nuptiis tradiderit, injuriam faciens gratiae Dei, haec Anathema sit cum eo qui in nuptiis illius convenerit.* — And Can. 15. *Si qua virgo se dedicaverit Deo, similiter Monachus, non licet eis nuptiis jungi. Si vero inventi fuerint hoc facientes, maneant excommunicati.*

- §. 22. Again, in the Fathers nothing is more frequent, and that in the most ancient. S. Ignatius in Ep. ad Tharsenses, & ad Antiochenes, making mention of *Virgines Deo sacrae* in his time. In the first, after *Viri diligite sponas vestras*, &c. he saith, *Eas, quae in virginitate, honorate ut sacras Christi; eas, quae in honestate viduas, ut altare Dei, &c.* In the second, — *Populus subjiciatur Presbyteris & Diaconis. Virgines cognoscant, cui consecraverunt se ipsas.* This in the copies approved by Archbishop Usber, and Dr. Hammond. Tertullian and S. Cyprian before A. D. 300, writ Tracts; one *de velandis virginibus* (i.e. *sacris*.) That they should cover their faces with veils, &c: where he mentions *votum continentiae* — *viderit ipsum continentiae votum*, p. 200. — and distinguisheth between *virgines hominum*, and *virgines Dei*. — *Ambiunt virgines hominum adversus virgines Dei*, &c. p. 193. — and near the end he saith to such *Non mentiris nuptam. Nupsisti enim Christo; illi tradidisti carnem tuam: illi sponsasti maturitatem tuam*, &c. And of those who should offer to pull off this veil, he saith; *O sacrilega manus, quae dicatum Deo habitum detrabere potuerunt!* &c. — The other, *de disciplina & habitu virginum* (i.e. *sacrarum*), of whom he saith there: — *Quae se Christo dicaverunt,*

verunt, & a carnali concupiscentia recedentes tam carne quam mente se Deo voverunt,— and that they were *flos Ecclesiastici germinis* &c gaudere per illas, atque in illis largiter florere Ecclesie matris gloriosam fecunditatem; and that those of them who afterward yeild to lust, are *adultera Christi*. —And see his Epistle to Pomponius, about some that lived unchastly, after that *ex fide se Christo dicaverant, sanctitati suae se destinarent, propter regna caelorum se castraverant*, &c. To these, that you may know that anciently also those who lived Monastick lives made vows thereof, (the contrary of which some endeavour to perswade us,) I wil add only two other testimonies: one out of S. Basil, *prefat. constitut. Monast.* *Nuptias velut compedes fugit; vitam suam Deo consecrat, & castitatem profitetur, ut neque facultas ipsi sit conversionis ad nuptias:* the other out of S. Austin, in *Psalm. 75.* upon [*Vovete & reddite Domino Deo nostro.*] —*Alii virginitatem ipsam ab ineunte atate voverunt &c. isti voverunt plurimum.* —*Alius vovet relinquere omnia sua distribuendo pauperibus, & ire in communem vitam, in societatem sanctorum; magnum votum vovit.* —*Nescio quae castimonialis nubere voluit. Aliquid mali voluit? mali plane. Quare? Quia jam voverat Domino. Quid enim dixit de talibus Apostolus Paulus? (Cum dicat, viduas adolescentulas nubere si velint,) Quid autem ait de quibusdam, quae voverunt, & non reddiderunt? habentes, inquit, damnationem, quia jam fidem irritam fecerunt.* *Nemo ergo positis in Monasterio Frater dicat; Recedo de Monasterio. Neque enim soli, qui sunt in Monasterio perventuri sunt in regnum caelorum: Respondetur ei; sed illi non voverunt, tu vovisti.* And concerning the married, by consent vowing continency, and obligation afterward for ever to observe it, see S. Austin's 199 Epistle to *Ecdicia*. The argument of which Epistle I will transcribe you. —*Mulier quaedam [i. e. this Ecdicia] in scio marito susceperat votum Continentiae. Post tamen maritus assensus est, & continenter cum ea vixit, non sinens tamen ut Monacha vestem sumeret. Tandem in scio marito facultates omnes duobus [Monachis] veluti pauperibus erogavit, cum haberet filium puerum ex eodem viro. Maritus suspicans eos Monachos esse ex eorum numero, qui penetrant & praedantur domos alienas, resiliit a proposito, & capit machari.* — Now in this Epistle St. Austin blames *Ecdicia* indeed, for all the things above named, which she had done without the consent of her husband, commanding her to submit, and ask his pardon, &c. but as to the vow of Continency, to which they had once both consented (notwithstanding his fornicating,) he holds them both for ever obliged to it, and exhorts her, at least, to perseverance therein. —*Quod enim* (saith he) *Deo pari consensu ambo voveratis, perseveranter usque in finem redde-*

re ambo debuistis; a quo proposito si lapsus est ille, tu saltem constantissime persevera. Thus He. As for other quotations of Fathers, I refer you to the Controvertists: instead of which I will set you down the confessions concerning them of *Calvin, Instit.* 4. l. 12. c. 27. s. — *Secuta sunt deinde tempora,* (he means after the Conc. Nicen.) *quibus invaluit nimis superstitiosa cælibatus admiratio, &c. Hac, quia videbantur reverentiam Sacerdotio conciliare, magno plausu etiam antiquitus recepta esse fateor.* Now the reason, why he censures not the times till after *Nice*, is the story of *Paphnutius*, from which he gathers, those former times *Conjugium in Sacerdotio tolerasse*, not oberving, or concealing, that it was only *Conjugium* contracted before Ordination. Himself mean-while condemning the Canons which these times approved; *quibus vetitum est, ne matrimonium contraherent, qui pervenissent ad sacerdotii gradum.* (Sect. 27. & Sect. 29. 28.) *Nulla omnino conditione dandum esse locum iis Canonibus censeo, quæ vinculum Cælibatus Ecclesiastico ordini injiciunt.* Concerning vows of single life, (13. c. 17. §.) *Hoc, inquit, ab ultima memoria fuit observatum, ut se alligarent continentia voto, qui totos se Domino dicere vellent.* His Answer. *Fateor certe antiquitus quoque receptum fuisse hunc morem: sed eam acratem sic ab omni vitio liberam fuisse non concedo, ut pro regula habendum sit quicquid tunc factum est.* — And the confession of *Pet. Martyr de Cælibatu & Votis.* — *Ut quod verum est fateamur, eos in hac causa habemus iniquiores. Statim enim ab Apostolorum temporibus nimium tribui ceptum est Cælibatui.* And of *St. Austin* he saith; *Iste vir Dei scribit* (speaking of Vows) *ut homo deceptus.* Now the objections which are made, by the opposers of the law of Celibacy, for those entering into Holy Orders; or of vows of Celibacy, for other persons, out of the Canons of Councils, or the writings of the Fathers, are not against any thing here affirmed: but either, concerning some, who, having wives before Ordination, were not obliged afterward to abstain from them, (allowed still by the *Greek Church*, except to Bishops only), *or concerning marriages contracted after Ordination or Vows, that such are not *irrita*; of which opinion *S. Austin* is clearly, *De bono Viduitatis*, c. 8, 9, &c. a thing granted by all after only simple vows; and after solemn, disputed still; whether such persons, who have so solemnly delivered, and made over themselves in a particular espousal to God, are made illegitimate for any Secular marriage afterward *jure Divino*, or only *jure Ecclesiastico*. (See *Bell. de Monach.* 2. l. 34. c. sect. Respond. convenit.) For the Church hath always claimed much power (as being not restrained by the Levitical law, *qua talis*, but only by that of Nature, nor prescribed any thing by Christ) in
or-

ordering the matters of marriage ; and in hindering some persons from marrying, (even not to making the marriage *illicitum* to be done, but *irritum* when done,) who are not restrained therefrom by the Divine law, or the law of Nature. See if you please the discourses of this in *Estius 4. sent. 40. d. 3. s. &c.* — 28. d. sect. 4, 8, 9: * or, concerning those, who, after vowing continency, live in fornication and uncleanness, that such, notwithstanding their vow formerly made, had better marry than thus offend. Which is granted by all, after a simple vow : (hear what Bellarm. saith, (*de Monach. 2. l. 34. c. sect. Est autem.* —) — *Licet sine peccato contrahi nequeunt, tamen vere nuptie sunt : & ideo aliquo modo minus malum est nubere post votum ejusmodi, quam assidue fornicari, tum ob fidem conjugii, tum ob prolem legitimam, tum ob alia bona, &c.*) * But let it be granted them after a solemn also : but if from hence they would prove the lawfulness of marriage after vowing continency, the places they produce will no way bear it. They are three, much pressed : one of S. Cyprian, *Epistola ad Pomponium 62. Quod si ex fide se Christo dicaverunt, pudice & caste sine ulla fabula perseverent ; ita fortes & stabiles pramium virginittis expectent : si autem perseverare nolunt, aut non possint, melius est ut nubant, quam in ignem delictis suis cadant.* The second of S. Hierom, *Ep. ad Demetriadem 8. Sanctum Virginitatis propositum & celestis Angelorumque familie gloriam quarundam non bene se agentium nomen infamat ; quibus aperte dicendum est, ut aut nubant, si se non possint continere ; aut contineant, si nolunt nubere.* The third of S. Austin, *de sancta Virginitate, 34. c.* upon that of the Apostles, *1 Tim. 5. Nubere volunt.* — *Ha igitur* (he speaks of those who have vowed chastity) *qua nubere volunt, & ideo non nubunt, quia impune non possunt, (qua melius nuberent, quam urerentur) quas punitet professionis, & piget confessionis, nisi correctum cor dirigant, & Dei timore rursus libidinem vincant, in mortuis deputande sunt.* &c. *1 Tim. 5. 6.* — But in these places the Fathers, only of two evils, if one of them they will do, wish rather the less to be done ; and prefer marriage, being in it self, tho not to them after a vow, lawful, before living in fornication, and other uncleannes, neither to them after vows, nor before in it self, lawful : therefore they say, *si nolunt continere, or perseverare, nubant.* Which marriage yet none at all allow lawful ; namely to none who can keep their vows. As for the *non possunt*, they speak it not of them as no way able to keep their vow, (for then indeed I grant, marriage would be lawful, if the vow of virginity were impossible to be kept,) but of them as, by their own fault (which they may redress [therefore S. Austin saith, *nisi correctum cor dirigant, &c.*])

impotent. Which may clearly appear (to any who delight not rather to make the Fathers to contradict themselves, even where their speeches are most easily reconciled) both by the same Fathers allowing these perpetual vows, and their holding in all the possibility of continency; shewed before. Of which also hear S. Hierom, (comment. in Matt. 19. c.) upon [*Non omnes capiunt.*] *Nemo putet sub hoc verbo vel fatum vel fortunam introduci: quod hi sunt virgines, quibus a Deo datum sit, aut quos quidam casus ad hoc adduxerit: sed his datum est, qui petierunt, qui voluerunt; qui ut acciperent laboraverunt. Omni enim petenti dabitur, & pulsanti aperietur, &c. — Qui potest capere, capiat; qui potest pugnare, pugnet; superet, ac triumphet.* — And adversus Jovinianum 2. l. 19. c. to this Apostate Monk, who equalled a virginal and conjugal state, he saith: *Virgines tue, quas prudentissimo consilio quod nemo unquam legerat nec audierat, de Apostolo docuisti [melius est nubere, quam uri] occultos adulteros in apertos verterunt maritos. Non suavit hoc Apostolus, non electionis vas; Virgilianum consilium est,*

Conjugium vocat, hoc prætexit nomine culpam:

See S. Austin (Confess. 6. l. 11. c.) — *Putabam me miserum fore nimis, si fame privarer amplexibus: & medicinam misericordie tue ad eandem infirmitatem sanandam non cogitabam, quia expertus non eram: & propriarum virium credebam esse continentiam, quarum mihi non eram conscius; cum tam stultus essem, ut nescirem, sicut scriptum est, [Wisdom, seu Sapient. 8. c. 21.] Neminem esse posse continentem, nisi tu dederis. Utique dares, si gemitu interno pulsarem aures tuas, & fide solida in te jactarem curam meam.* — (De adulterinis Conjugiis 2. l. 20. c.) *Solemus eis [qui propter adulterium dimissis conjugibus suis, alias volunt ducere, & quum prohibentur, infirmitatem nobis carnis opponunt] proponere etiam continentiam Clericorum; qui plerumque ad eandem sarcinam subeundam capiuntur inviti, eamque susceptam usque ad debitum finem, Domino adjuvante, perducunt. Dicimus ergo eis; Quid si & vos ad hoc subeundum populorum violentia caperemini, nonne susceptum caste (i.e. in celibacy) custodiretis officium, repente conversi ad impetrandas vires a Domino, de quibus nunquam antea cogitastis?* See the like in Psalm. 137. *Nemo presumat viribus suis reddere quod voverit: Qui te hortatur, ut voveas; ipse adjuvat, ut reddas.* So other Fathers also. Chrysost. Comment. in Matt. 19. His datum est qui sponte id eligunt: *Quod ideo dixit, ut ostenderet, superiore nobis auxilio opus esse; quod quidem omnibus paratum est, si volumus in hac lucta evadere superiores.* Add to this that place of S. Austin in Psalm. 75. quoted before §. 22. and that 104. Can. of Conc. Carthag. 4. subscribed by him, quoted before §. 21. with some others there

to the same purpose, where they deny marriage lawful to Votaries, and Anathematize them. To which I will add that of S. *Ambrose ad Virginem lapsam*, 5. c. *Quæ se sponndit Christo, & sacrum velamen accepit, jam nupsit; jam immortalī jūcta est viro, & jam si voluerit nubere communi lege conjugii adulterium perpetrat.* —And that of S. *Chrysostom*, spoken by way of caution to young *Theodorus* deserting his Monastick life. *Paran. 2.* —*Honorabile, inquit, connubium, & cubile immaculatum. Sed tibi jam non est integrum jura connubii servare; cælesti enim sponso semel jūctum illum relinquere, & uxoris laqueis implicari, adulterii crimen incurrere est. Quamvis millies hoc ipsum nuptias voces, ego tamen & adulterio* (that is, the adultery of another man who hath not vowed, not his, as I conceive him) *illud tanto pejus affirmo, quanto major ac melior mortalibus Deus. Nunc autem nihil in te penitus tui juris est. —Nam si mulier proprii corporis non habet potestatem, sed vir: multo magis hi, qui Christo potius, quam sibi vivunt, ditionem corporis sui habere non possunt.* So S. *Austin*, who holds not the marriages of Votaries to be null, or no true marriages, (see *de bono Viduati*, c. 8, 9, 10, 11.) yet saith in the same place, c. 11. *Non possum quidem dicere fæminas a proposito meliore lapsas si nupsint adulteria esse, non conjugia: sed plane non dubitaverim dicere lapsus & ruinas a castitate sanctiore, quæ vorvetur Deo, adulteriis esse peiores. Si enim ad offensionem Christi pertinet, cum membrum ejus fidem non servat marito, quanto gravius offenditur, cum illi ipsi non servatur fides in eo, quod oblatum exigit, qui non exegerat offerendum?* This in answer to those places, wherein tis pretended, the Fathers held marriage lawful after vows; or continency to seem not possible. But the Apostle sufficiently decides this business (at least as the Fathers understood him) in *1 Tim. 5.* who affirms his young votaries to have *damnation*, (i.e. great guilt upon them,) for breaking their former faith or vow by marrying. Now this denying of marriage, the remedy of incontinency, to all such as have passed a vow, argues that the Fathers held the gift of continency denied to none such. Which if it be true, the only considerable objection (that I know of) against a Monastick life is here also removed. For as concerning the other two vows, * That (commonly called) of *Poverty*, provided, that one remain still either possessed of what in humane probability is enough to supply him with necessities, or have a trade or a profession (amongst which I reckon preaching of the Gospel one) wherewith from time to time to get his living, (for the *labourer is worthy of his hire*, as our Saviour told his disciples, when he sent them abroad to preach without any provision); and may in reason presume he shall receive it; and That

*That of *Obedience*, provided, it be engaged only for things lawful, about which lawfulness, when any doubt happens, he is to be guided by the Church's, not his private Superiors judgment: (Which I think, in no Monastical institution that ever was, can be shewed to be peremptorily denied to any, for the ordinary plea of many of the Roman Doctors is contrary; namely, that no Authority less than infallible (which Superiors are not) can oblige to absolute obedience and submission to their judgment in matters credible or practicable in order to our salvation (See *Notes of Infallibility*;) Tho those who are under Authority are prudentially advised, rather to submit in all things to their Superiors (most likely) better judgments, than (with very little sign of humility) indulge their own; and causelessly afflict their Society with appeals and contests;) These two vows, I say, thus qualified, are not liable to any just exceptions. And indeed the former we see done frequently amongst us, in many parting for ever with their estates (only what is necessary reserved) to their Son: why not then to the poor? and the latter in Servants promising, or also swearing obedience to their Masters; why not to a Spiritual Superior?

- §. 23. Neither is there (besides the examples we have of this vowing both in Scriptures and the Fathers) as seems to me any argument to be drawn from reason, why we may not presume on God's assistance, and enablement of us, to perform such vow; either because it is vowing of a thing not absolutely necessary to salvation; or because we are not certain of our ability, and command of our will, to use the means, which ability also we have not from our selves, but from God. For 1. are not most of our vows (yet these granted lawful) about things, which, as some way advantageous, yet, are not absolutely necessary to our salvation? as the vowing, * of abstinence from the further use of some sensual, tho lawful pleasure, formerly to us an occasion of sin; * of giving such a proportion of alms (suppose half of our estates) to the poor, (such a one was *Ananias* his vow, *Act. 5.* whose fault, so much aggravated by *S. Peter*, seems to be more in his keeping back part, after his devoting it to God, than in pretending, by a lye, to bring it all: see the inference ver. 3. But *Peter* &c.) * of using every day two or three times of prayer extraordinary; * of not drinking wine, because of many former temptations by it to excess. And 2^{ly}, is not the performance of all these only by the power God gives us, (who cannot think a good thought, much less curb the least appetite, without him,) and therefore we give him thanks also for the performance

formance of them? 3. And again, make we not in baptism a vow of things necessary to salvation, *i.e.* of *repentance*, and of *faith*? but the expressions concerning which in Scripture are the same as those concerning continency. to wit, that they *are not given to all*: [See *Jo.* 6. 37, 39. 64, 65. — *Tim.* 2. 25. — *Matt.* 13. 11. *It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*] Not as if God absolutely denied such a gift to them, but only upon their non-preparation, and other obstacles, which by their own fault hindred them from receiving it; for so our Saviour expounds himself in the next words, *ver.* 12. *For whosoever hath, to him shall be given.* In the same manner may it be said of continency; *non omnibus datur*; but *habenti* (*i.e.* to men using those endeavors and preparations towards it, which God hath given them power to use) *dabitur*. (*Jo.* 12. 39. — *Eph.* 2. 8. compared 2 *The.* 3. 2. *Act.* 13. 48.) For which expressions if we make the vow of continency unlawful, why not the other? Now who is there that may not lawfully vow, to repent of his sins, to believe in God to his lives end, to observe God's commands, &c? (118. *Pf.* 106. 108. v.) yet as *S. Austin* saith, *Nemo presumat viribus suis reddere quod voverit. Qui te hortatur ut voveas, ipse adiuvat ut reddas.* [In *Psalm.* 137.] Here it is said; there is not the same reason: because Faith is a thing necessary to salvation, not so Virginal Continency, therefore we cannot justly have the same confidence, that God, surely not wanting to us in necessities, must needs supply us also in superfluities. *Resp.* Doubtless, since God, as he hath commanded duty, so also hath advised perfection, as not in the one, so neither in the other, is he wanting in his gift, to those that seek it; especially the latter undertaking (as higher) deserving more encouragement. Else why is not [*petenti dabitur*] restrained also to necessities? and why may a man lawfully make vows in other things, that he conceives profitable, but acknowledgeth are not absolutely necessary to his salvation, (as in the things mentioned before, as also in other rules of perfection, 1 *Cor.* 9. *Luk.* 12. 33. *Matt.* 19. 29.) if he may not presume on God's assistance in such things only profitable, without which he is able of himself to do nothing profitable. 4. Again, I know not why, if we may safely vow the keeping of any of God's commandments, and may make a *covenant with our eyes*, *not to look upon a woman to lust after her*, why, I say, we may not also, to guard our passion from being set on fire, and from burning; since the former seems to be the more difficult.

6.24.

5. To which this further may be added : That Continency, as any other thing advantaging us in God's Service, from Vows receives a much higher value, which may invite us to such pious engagements) than without it ; whilst it proceeds from an affection more confirmed and stedfast in good. A resolute vow having the virtue of an habit ; and to act good, as it were necessarily, being Angelical : and he that vows offering up and sacrificing to God, not the act only of continency with others for the present ; but the power or faculty thereof for ever ; and the fruit, together with the tree that bears it. Therefore find we frequent exhortations and examples of vowing in Scripture : see *Pf. 76. 11. Jon. 1. 16. If. 19. 21. &c.* And very expedient doubtless it is (after some trial and experience of our having a reasonable command over our selves, and of our not suffering a very tyrannical mastery of our passions) to pass a vow in such matters to fortify our selves against temptations, and the mutability of our inclinations ; by which the less former tie we have of our selves, the easilier we are seduced. *Felix necessitas, quæ ad meliora compellit*, saith *S. Austin* of Vows.

As for those places of the Apostle which are urged, against vowing, at least before *sixty*, or for leave given to marry, tho it be after vows, upon incontnency ; [as *1 Tim. 5.9. Let not a widow be taken into the number under 60 years old : —and 14. I will therefore, that the younger women marry &c.* and *1 Cor. 7. 9. If they cannot contain let them marry : and v. 35. I speak not that I may cast a snare upon you.*] In answer to them, I take this first for granted ; that all those (young or old) who have the power to be continent, may safely vow it ; since the reason given by the Reformed, why it may not be vowed, is, because it is a thing not in our power. Again, I say, that if these places prove, either that continency before 60. may not be vowed, or marrying after a vow may be lawful, upon this reason, because some persons before *sixty*, and after vowing, cannot contain ; then the Apostle will be made to contradict himself. For according to this he could not say of the Juniors, (whose particular gift of continency he could not know, but had rather reason to presume, from the miscarriage he saw in them, that they had it not,) that they had *damnation*, for marrying ; or for not keeping their vow or promise to Christ, which they could not keep ; but *damnation*, for making such a vow, which they must necessarily break. For, *Non est peccatum violare, quod servare impossibile est* ; and it was as lawful to break such a vow, as unlawful to make it. But yet notwithstanding this, the Apostle plainly saith, *damnation* they had for marrying, and for breaking this promise, not for making

ing it. I conclude therefore, that the Apostle's advice here of marriage is not * to Votaries, nor absolutely to all other younger women: for so his *volo juniores nubere* here would be contrary to his *volo omnes esse sicut meipsum*, 1 Cor. 7. 7. and would lay an obligation on all young folks to marry: But * to those that are in such a manner qualified, as those were that miscarried: *so qualified*; not from want of power from God to contain, but want of will, and of a stedfast purpose to make use of that power, (as S. Paul describes it 1 Cor. 7. 37.) which instability of the will, and pronenes to incontinency (that is in some much more than in others) every one ought well to examin before they vow; that so they may make use of the lawful remedy, which in the second place God hath provided for it, namely marriage; if they do not aspire to the higher cure thereof by prayer, and mortifications. See Dr. Hammond in his Paraphrase, expounding it thus, [*That those who have not attained to such gravity of mind, and command over themselves, do, in that case, betake themselves to a married life:*] — So, in that text, [*if they cannot contain, let them marry.*] (Where note, that our Translation renders *ἐκ ἀνυπακούουσι*, If they cannot contain; and so Matt. 19. 11. *ὅτι οὐ πάντες ὑπομένουσιν*, All men cannot receive this saying &c. without rule or precedent, that I know of: for the *Vulgar* hath it, *omnes non capiunt: & si non se continent.*) The advice is not, to any that have an obligation to contain, (tho actually perchance they do not so), as it is not to the married; tho one party be sick, absent, or impotent; nor to those who have vowed, it being proved, that such may contain, from the Apostle's saying, *they have damnation in marrying*; who yet actually *non se continebant*: But the advice is to those only, that are free from any obligation against marriage; that if they perceive themselves so affected, as that they have much temptation, and no stedfast purpose to contain, if they have gotten (which yet is by their own defect) so little power and mastery over their will, (which mastery is acquired by some pains and practice) as that they cannot (not cannot possibly but cannot without much difficulty) contain, (for we say we cannot do a thing, tho in our power, which we can hardly do): that then they should make use of the common remedy allowed by God for it. All which weaknesses, since they are by industry remediable, excuse none from continency, who have already made any engagement to it. To the 3d. place, 1 Cor. 7. 35. I grant a vow rashly undertaken to be a dangerous snare: *rashly*, I say, i.e. without well proving before it what mastery we have over our carnal inclinations. Lastly, for the admission of none under *sixty*,

the Apostle seems to prescribe this age with respect to their impotency then to get their living, and liableness to want, (see *ver. 4*, and *16.*) and to their staydness and gravity, [*see v. 13, 14.*] as much or more than to their continency, in which a lesser age would have rendred them secure. But suppose the Apostle chiefly to have reference to this, yet was it not done as if any lesser age hath not a power of continency; or experiencing their ability to live single, might not also resolve it: but because the Church had not the same means to be assured of their inclinations, and was much concerned in her first growth, after the experience too of some miscarriages, thus to prevent all scandal. But later Church, upon experience of the chaste behaviour of such persons from the power of more discipline, due restraint, &c. thought not her self obliged by this rule fitted for the Apostles days. But as *S. Paul*, from the lability of younger women, admitted them at 60: so the 4th. General Council of *Chalcedon*, Can. 14. *cum diligenti probatione* admitted them at forty.

X. As God hath encouraged us to single life by recommending it; and denies the power to none at all, taking the pains, and using the means, that are necessary to procure it; So I grant, that the *act and exercise of Continency*, and purity, *is much more difficultly attained*, than any other matter of a *Vow whatever*; and the sin, which the undiscreef attempters thereof fall into, if they miscarry, very abominable. Therefore is there nothing in all the Scripture recommended with so much caution, and putting men in mind of their own abilities, as this: which appears both in our Saviour's limitations, *Matt. 19. 11, 12.* and in the Apostle's proceeding so tenderly in this point, and with such cautious and suspended steps, (*see 1 Cor. 7. 2, 6, 7, 25, 28, 35, 36.*) tho much commending it, yet warily recommending it: looking doubtles as on one side at the heavenly perfection of this virtue, so on the other at the hainousnes and filthines of those crimes, and the great peril of those snares, that men, avoiding, and obstinate against, the common merciful remedy of marriage, were endangered to fall into, in an unmortified pursuit of this grace. More *difficultly*, I say, *is this grace attained*, both by reason of this strong impression made in our nature by the most wise providence, for the necessary use of propagation; and by reason of the concupiscence of the flesh; which, as it was the first exorbitancy appearing in *Adam*, (*They saw that they were naked*, *Gen. 3. 7.* being only a modest expression of the rising of concupiscence; compared with *Gen. 2. 25.* therefore followed by shame); so retains it its strength in all his sons, beyond any other passion

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passion whatsoever : to which likewise one person (and in him one age of his life) may have yet a far greater pronity than another, by the greater heat of their constitution ; natural impetuosity of their passion ; more liberal diet ; much rest and vacancy from employment ; conversation amongst tempting objects, &c. so that such, without extream difficulty, cannot contain, as it also many times happens even to them after divorce, &c. (who, all grant, have from God the power of containing, if they will use their best endeavors). And in respect of the great strength of the temptations of lust, beyond all other, and of these great impediments in some, more than in others, (*i.e.* the natural temper, age, condition of life, former habits, &c. and of most mens averseness to undergo those rigors and mortifications, which procure and preserve continency, &c.) I conceive it is ; that our Saviour answered his forward disciples voting, upon his discours, that none should marry ; * that to *all this was not given*, and that *some only could receive it* ; and so the Apostle by the same spirit, * *that every one hath his proper gift of God*, one after this manner, and another after that, 1 Cor. 7. 7. and * that there was a necessity to some parents of *giving their virgin in marriage*, (ver. 36, 37.) therefore he saith, *it is not given to all*, *i. e.* without such pains-taking as some other gifts are ; *Nor do all receive it :]* For tho power to contain is given to any who use the means, subdue their passions, &c. yet few there are, who can without much difficulty and resolution so master their will, subdue their passions ; few, who have a temper naturally so calm, or artificially so rebated, that they can arrive to such a power. And so, *every one hath his proper gift of God, &c.] i. e.* First, in respect of gifts of nature ; men are of several tempers and abilities, some inclined more to one passion, as enamour'dnes, some to another, [*as continency,*] some more, some less, subject to be tempted ; some fitted for one sort of life, some another ; which all yet are the distributions of God, (see 1 Cor. 7. 17.) So that some can more easily, some not without almost insuperable difficulty, contain ; for we say, we *cannot* do, tho a thing in our power, what we can *hardly* do, or which is very troublesome to us to effect. See Luke 14. 20. 2 Cor. 8. 3. — Such phrases are not unfrequent in Scripture, Jo. 13. 36. Luke 14. 26, &c. to 34. Jo. 6. 65. spoken in things, of which we do not deny an absolute possibility, whilst by prayer &c. may be attained stronger inclinations ; but yet in them we suppose to some a present impotency, and impromptitude of their will, and waywardness of their inclinations ; especially where the thing requires a strong *conatus*, and a stout spirit, as *Peter's dy-*
ing.

ing for Christ; their forsaking friends, and all they had, for Christ. Luk. 14.26. and 33. Their believing in Christ, especially at that time, when appearing to them in such weakness of our flesh; none of these things (tho) being absolutely impossible to them. 2ly, in respect of gifts of grace every man hath his proper gift of God; some, superior; some, inferior, graces; some, Virginal, some only conjugal, chastity, (1 Cor. 7. 9.) according to every man's capacity, (Matt. 25. 15.) or endeavours: which not premised, the grace is not bestowed. For we must know, that God always gives not his habitual graces at first, but excites and assists our endeavors for them; and afterwards crowns these endeavors with them. And hence, because most do not well imploy God's former grace, (in which he is not wanting to those, whom he questions for want of the latter) the other happen to be given but to a very few. See Matt. 13. 11. concerning that necessary grace of Spiritual illumination, [*To you it is given; to them it is not given;*] and Jo. 12. 39. concerning faith; [*Therefore they could not believe.*] See Jo. 6. and so Mar. 6. 5. concerning the favors of God, that he is ready to do for us, but we are incapable of receiving; [*And he could there do no mighty work.*] In all which the deficiency is not to be understood to proceed from the want of will in God to give, but from the want of preparation in them to receive. (See Matt. 13. 11. compared with 12. — Mar. 6. 5. compared with 6.) If they receive not, because God gives not; Matt. 19. 11. and if God gives not, because they do not by prayer, and other means, prepare themselves for it; it follows, the prime reason, why they receive not, is because they are unmortified, or unprepared. Now the exhortation ver. 12. *He that is able to receive it, let him &c.* See Mat. 20. 22. plainly supposeth, * that God gives it to those that are able; and the instance in some that *make themselves Eunuchs*, proveth, * that men also make themselves able; able, by God's concurrence, and preventing and assisting aid, or grace, from whom is all ability. Which ability also supposes that he gives to some, not others, only in the same sense as he gives faith, and other graces; (see Eph. 2. 8. compared with 2 Thess. 3. 2.) yet notwithstanding, as all may both pray for faith, and upon their endeavor presume they shall receive it; and may promise and vow unto God to be faithful; so notwithstanding the former expressions (if no other reason be alledged) we may say the same of Continency; That it is a gift *attainable by all*, as it is a gift *by few attained*. Thus much concerning the grace. But 3ly, in respect of the faculty it self, and the using of it well, in our endeavors to attain such a grace,

grace, tis true also, that our being willing to do a thing is frequently called God's gift; and there is nothing, of which we can say, tis our fault or infirmity that we do it not, but that we may as truly say, it is God's gift, if we do it. (See *Phil.* 2. 13. *Jer.* 10. 23. *Prov.* 16. 1. *Ex.* 4. 11. 2 *Chron.* 18. 31. — 10. 15. — *Ezr.* 6. 22. *Matt.* 13. 11.) Therefore also this our desiring such a grace to be given us, or our entertaining such a grace offered us, is also in some sense another gift or grace of God to us, without which we should not have possessed his other grace; and so, our own endeavour, as well as the grace we seek for, is all gift and grace, tho we should go *in infinitum*; till we also find (as the most ordinary doctrine of the School is) that the first motion of the will to embrace God's grace is also the grace, gift, or work of God in us: els if this motion of the will were from it self, in any sense contradictory to that of being from God, then there would be some good in us, not from God; then something, which we had not received; and so, place for merit, and boasting; contrary to *Rom.* 4. 2, 4. — 3. 17. But I conceive, tis not said of these first gifts of God, (*i.e.* of his first excitings of the will, his both preventing and assisting aids and helps of the will, in its using the means to attain his further, and richer, habitual, and inherent graces,) that *non omnibus data sunt*; but of those other second graces, which are given but to few, because the means, and his former commoner aids are used by few: of which it is said, that, only *to him that hath, shall be given*. Of those first aids therefore we may safely say, that they are so far common to all, (to whom is come the found of the Gospel, and who shall be judged at the last day by the Gospel) that it is their fault, in any duties, which are absolutely commanded them, and their defect, in any counsels of perfection, if they, by not making use of them, come short of such duty or perfection; and, that any thing being thus said to be God's gift hinders not, but that it likewise may be said also to be in man's power, (meaning a power, in man, but, from God,) as long as the tender of such a gift is made to him, and ability also to acquire it given to him. But of this more in my *Notes of Grace*. Yet since, there are some that allow not the means to attain faith, or other duties commanded, common to all to whom the Gospel is preached, (therefore *P. Martyr*, 3. class. 7.c. *Commun. locorum*. argues thus: *Magis videretur debere commune esse omnibus hominibus donum efficacis vocationis ad fidem in Christum, quam donum ad Celibatum*. — *Sed inter illos qui eandem predicationem audiunt, non omnes a Deo trahuntur*. Where he quotes *Jo.* 6. 44. *Nemo venit ad me* :) Let but so much be granted

granted from them, of the means to attain continency, as is, to attain faith; and this will serve our turn, without reasoning the point any further in this place; for then see what will follow §. 23. In granting therefore, that the using of the means also to obtain graces from God is the gift of God; yet we affirm, that it is only by their own default (for which see *Luk. 12. 57. Matt. 11. 21. Mar. 12. 34. Matt. 23. 37. Jer. 18. 4. — 8. 10.*) if in things absolutely commanded, and their own defect, if in things recommended for their greater perfection, that such do not use the means, and that they may use them if they will. Because these must consist together, *i. e.* * that we can do no good (small or great) but from God; and * that we have free-will to do good, and if we do not good, tis by our own default; and * that when we do any good, tis not without our own endeavour. Els we should be free from sin in not observing the divine exhortations; and there would be no vice, nor virtue; and consequently no (just) punishment, or reward. See concerning this *S. Austin, De Gratia & libero Arbitrio 4. cap. Nunquid non liberum arbitrium Timothei est exhortatus Apostolus, dicens, Contine teipsum? 1 Tim. 5. 23. — Et in hac re potestatem voluntatis ostendit, ubi ait, Non habens necessitatem; potestatem autem habens suæ voluntatis, ut servet virginem suam. 1 Cor. 7. 37. Et tamen non omnes capiunt verbum hoc, sed quibus datum est, &c. — Itaque ut hoc verbum, quod non ab omnibus capitur, ab aliquibus capiatur, & Dei donum est, & liberum arbitrium &c.* Neither will this be sufficient to hinder a vow, because it is only of God's gift (that we are willing to use the means) to keep and fulfil it. For also we cannot do any thing he commands, unless he gives us the will; and yet may we vow to do any thing he commands.

§. 26.
Therefore
not hastily
to be vowed.

XI. And in respect of these considerations, as all ought to endeavour and covet this the most happy condition of life, and many men are much wanting to their own perfection, the Service of God, and of the Church, &c. who, out of neglect to this gift, and not out of, or from, any strength of temptation cast themselves into the impediments of marriage, and might receive it, and do not: so I conceive it is *not so safe for any, who are not very well practised first in mortification*, and experience in much piety and devotion, *to vow it. Not safe*; not out of any diffidence in God, as if he would be wanting in his assistance proportionable to our endeavour; but in reference to the flesh, lest it should happen, in this chiefest piece of its strength, if we do not find that we have a strong command over

over our selves, to overmaster us; and our good resolution become a snare to us, 1 Cor. 7. 35. *beginning to build, and not able to finish.* In which S. Paul's wariness may be a sufficient precedent to ours; who, * finding the young widows after such purposes (by their own fault indeed) remarrying, and * considering the greatness of internal and external temptations incident to youth, (tho the indulgent discipline the infancy of the Church was then capable of, not so restrained as latter times have since provided,) ordered that none under *sixty* should be admitted into publick service upon such strict bonds and obligations. And indeed in the business of continency, in which some degree of burning is in the most pure, it is very hard, till long experience hath as it were assured us, at any one time exactly to measure our own strength, constancy, and steadfastness, whether we shall be able to contain for the time to come; and, by the intervening of new temptations &c. (unless we resolve wholly to shut up our selves from them) our future, is not easily judged by our present, complexion. And as, when I look at the heavenliness of a single life, I would advise all men to abstain; so when at the great difficulty of such a purity, as shall not be contaminated with one uncleanness, than which the Apostle adviseth rather to marry, I would counsel all men to marry; [See Conf. 2. l. 3. c. how S. Austin complains of his parents not preventing by marriage the many exorbitancies of his wanton youth:] seeing the single person much hazards a great sin, whilst he attempts as great a glory. But yet the zealous Servant of God can do all thro Christ that strengthneth him. Nor shall he in this be tempted above his power, 1 Cor. 10. 13. if he first tempt not himself; and the reward is well worthy the pains.

XII. *Tis not only lawful, but of singular benefit, that those offices more neerly conversant about the publick service of God, or the Church, should be discharged only by single persons, wholly sequestred from the world.* Which if the Apostle saw fitting in the ministring widows, the Deaconesses, (Rom. 16. 1.) how much more is it in the Clergy? Tho he, loth to lay such a hard burden on the tender shoulders of the Infancy of the Church, therefore nourished by him with milk, rather than strong meat; * when there was not so much choice of Pastors, and they of necessity to be admitted to such functions much sooner than the widows; and * when single life and Eunuchism was as yet, especially to the Jew, a strange proposal, (which may partly be the reason, why he, who became all things to all men, in the 1 Cor. 7. recommends single life so modestly,

§. 27.
Yet not unlawful for the Church, and very beneficial, to restrain the sacred function of the Ministry to single persons.

and after the way of delivering only his *advice and judgment*, (a phrase unusual in his other doctrines,) see 1 Cor. 7. 6, 8. compared with the 10, 25, 40,) restrained then the Clergy only to one wife. Yet (where there is sufficient plenty of single persons that are worthy, and not else) it seems no way unlawful or unjust, if the Church (which is * in this left to her liberty (for S. *Paul* restraining the Clergy only to one wife, obligeth them not by this, to have a wife) and * hath power to establish what the H. Scriptures no way prohibit) shall ordain (which is a means to make many more zealous of this excellent gift) * that single persons only shall be admitted into such employments, or at least into those functions amongst these of the more eminency and moment; and if these persons should afterward engage in marriage, * that they shall no longer stay in the same office. Which wisdom, since the world frequently shews in many other places of less consequence, they cannot be excused for omitting it in the Church-affairs, to which it is most proper.

Neither do I see what hurt or scandal ~~can come thereof~~, if only the Ecclesiastical Canons were strictly executed: 1. If none, but after long probation of their temperance, continency, gravity, mortification, were admitted into such sacred employments, (see what trial the Apostle requires before such admission, 1 Tim. 3. and elsewhere, [*not a novice, lest he fall into the temptation of the Devil; one of a good report, and found blameless; even the Deacons to be proved, before they use that office*, 1 Tim. 3. 10.]) 2. If all necessary restraints from the ordinary occasions and temptations of incontinency were used to such persons after admitted. 3. If the Church's censures were vigorously executed against the offenders.

Else, as Celibacy is better than Marriage, so Marriage is always honourable; but unchast celibacy, especially in the Ministers of Christ, most abominable, and for ever void of excuse. And even after such vows, (in which *petenti dabitur, nec patietur Deus nos superare quod possamus tentari*;) yet if such a one will not contain, I conceive (supposing no Ecclesiastical law to intervene, which may render marriage to such, when contracted, invalid, or not to be a marriage) he sins much less in marrying, *i. e.* in doing a thing in it self lawful, but against his vow, than in fornication, *i. e.* in doing a thing eternally unlawful, being against God's command: for the one fault is against God's law, the other only against his own. And if some, in comparing marriage with some one act of fornication or uncleanness, may affirm the first to be more opposite to a vow, than

than the latter; as rendering one incapable of observing his vow at all for the future, which the latter doth not: yet in this all will agree, that even to a Votary the living in Marriage, than living in continual Fornication, or other uncleanness, is a life to God less offensive. S. *Anstin de Bono Viduitatis*, 9. c. — *Non quia ipse nuptia vel talium, i.e. uxorem, damnanda judicantur, sed damnatur propositi fraus, damnatur fracta voti fides, &c.* — *Postremo damnantur tales, non quia conjugalem fidem posterius inierant, sed quia continentie primam fidem irritam fecerunt.*

FINIS.
